

## Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

SPC-03 SAM-01 DRC-01 /069 W  
----- 011595

R 130330Z FEB 74

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2003

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJECT: PLANNED IMPORTATION OF FILIPINO WORKERS GETS CAUTIOUS  
ACCEPTANCE

1. PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S ANNOUNCEMENT FROM  
THE PHILIPPINES THAT GOA PLANS TO BRING THIRTY-FIVE  
FILIPINOS TO WORK IN AUSTRALIA'S AUTOMOBILE FACTORIES,  
WAS WIDELY WELCOMED, AT LEAST PUBLICLY, BY INDUSTRY  
AND TRADE UNION LEADERS. NEW EXPERIMENT STEMS FROM  
PROPOSAL MADE BY LEYLAND AUTO COMPANY AT END OF 1973.

2. VICTORIAN STATE TRADES HALL COUNCIL SECRETARY,  
KEN STONE, TOLD LABATT FEBRUARY 13 THAT GOVERNMENT  
HAD MADE VAGUE OVERTURE TO VEHICLE BUILDERS' UNION  
DURING JANUARY TO GET REACTION TO SCHEME THEN UNDER

CONSIDERATION. UNION, AT TIME AND IN PRESS INTERVIEWS,  
FEBRUARY 13, VOICED NO OBJECTION. HOWEVER, STONE  
SAID THAT THIS PASSIVE ATTITUDE WOULD QUICKLY CHANGE  
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IF ATTEMPT WAS MADE TOR RECRUIT SKILLED FILIPINOS FOR

ANY TRADE REQUIRING APPRENTICE TRAINING. AUTO INDUSTRY HAS LONG STORMY HISTORY INVOLVING UNSKILLED MIGRANT WORKERS.

3. HOWEVER, OTHER OBSERVERS FEAR THAT ADDING NEW GROUP TO POLYGLOT AUTO WORKERS WILL HAVE EFFECT OF FURTHER RETARDING SLOW UPWARD PROGRESS OF MIGRANTS AS MANAGEMENT HAS CONSISTENTLY HELD DOWN WAGES ON GROUNDS THAT UNSKILLED MIGRANTS HAVE LOW PRODUCTIVITY. DIRECTOR, WORKERS' ECUMENICAL CENTER, ORGANIZATION FAIRLY OBJECTIVE AND WITH MUCH EXPERIENCE IN MIGRANT SOCIAL WELFARE PROBLEMS, VODICED THIS FEAR TO LABATT FEBRUARY 12.

4. BOB HAWKE, PRESIDENT OF AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (ACTU), TOLD LABATT THAT MINISTER OF LABOR CAMERON HAD CALLED HIM AT END OF JANUARY TO EXPLAIN POLICY. CAMERON SAID LABOR DEPARTMENT WOULD SEND SPECIAL COMMISSIONER TO MANILA TO SUPERVISE RECRUITMENT RATHER THAN DEPEND ON USUAL IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES. HAWKE DID NOT SEEM VERY INTERESTED OR IMPRESSED. HE HAD ALREADY MADE CAUTIOUS PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF ENDORSEMENT WHICH RECEIVED SOME PRESS PLAY.

5. ED ELLISON, GENERAL MOTORS' DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, TOLD LABATT FEBRUARY 13 THAT HE AND HIS COMPANY HAD "PRAGMATIC" VIEW OF NEW SCHEME. WHILE HE APPRECIATED GOA PRUDENCE IN HOLDING ORIGINAL DRAFT TO THIRTY-FIVE PEOPLE, HE SAID NEEDS OF LEYLANDS, GM AND OTHER COMPANIES "COULD BE COUNTED IN THOUSANDS". HOWEVER, GIVEN IMMEDIATE PAST EMPLOYMENT RECORD OF INDUSTRY, ELLISON SAID AUTO UNION'S APPARENT ENDORSEMENT OF PLAN WAS NOT REALLY TRUE. EMPLOYMENT BY AUTO COMPANIES IMMEDIATELY REFLECTS UP AND DOWN SWINGS IN ECONOMY, AND WORKERS DO NOT WANT ANY MORE COMPETITION FOR JOBS WHICH CAN SUDDENLY BECOME SCARCE. ELLISON CERTAIN THAT ANY LARGE INFLUX WOULD TOUCH OFF LABOR OPPOSITION.

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6. COMMENT: LABATT FEELS GOA GETTING MORE CREDIT THAT IT DESERVES FOR CHANGE IN RACIST IMMIGRATION POLICY WHICH IS REALLY NO CHANGE AT ALL. NEW FILIPINO WORKERS WILL NOT GET ANY TENURE IN ECONOMY, AND WILL FACE REPATRIATION IF THERE IS EVEN SLIGHT DEPRESSION. WHITLAM ANNOUNCEMENT IS CLEVER, EXPEDIENT, WITH SHORT TERM POLITICAL MERIT AT HOME AND ABROAD, BUT IS NOT HONEST ATTEMPT TO FACE WHITE SUPREMACIST

TENDENCY IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY AS WHOLE, AND IN TRADE  
UNIONS IN PARTICULAR. THERE IS AN "ENOCK POWELL" IN  
AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE AND THIS SORT OF SEMI-POLICY  
WILL NOT STOP HIM EMERGING.  
FLUKER

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## Message Attributes

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